

VZCZCXRO8410
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHMOS
DE RUEHKUK #0101/01 1181534
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 281534Z APR 06
FM REO KIRKUK
TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0600
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0638
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK 0666

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000101

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

BAGHDAD FOR POL, PAO, ROL COORDINATOR, NCT, IRMO, USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/25/2016
TAGS: [PINS](#) [PHUM](#) [PNAT](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#)
KISL, IZ, IR
SUBJECT: IRANIAN KURDS ORGANIZING AGAINST TEHRAN

REF: KIRKUK 99

KIRKUK 00000101 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: JBIGUS, PRT LEADER, REO Kirkuk, DoS.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. According to an Iranian journalist in hiding in Northern Iraq, Iranian President Ahmadinejad has been cracking down on the Kurds in Iran and has caused souring relations between the Iranian Government and minorities. The Iranian Government under Ahmadinejad has become more religious, yet less respectful of civil society and human rights. Iranian Kurds remain politically active through secret organizations and parties. The bulk of the Iranian Kurd population is young, politically active, and prone to revolt. Most Iranian Kurds rely on the internet to communicate and understand developments.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Mahdeh Ahmadi, a freelance journalist who writes political stories about Iranian Kurds and is now living in northern Iraq, shared his views on the current Iranian regime with PRT on April 4. Ahmadi has asked PRT for political asylum in the U.S.(REFTEL). After consulting with Baghdad RefCoord, PRT has advised Ahmadi to contact UNHCR.

Kurds Resisting Ahmadinejad Government -----

¶3. (C) Ahmadi bemoaned that Iranian President Ahmadinejad marked the end of the reformist era in Iranian politics. He said that while the Kurds had enjoyed more rights under the reformists, Ahmadinejad was cracking down on the Kurds. Ahmadi attributed the the Iranian administration's souring relations with all minority groups to Ahmadinejad. Iranian minorities complained that the government was more religious, yet less respectful of civil society and human rights.

¶4. (C) Ahmadi believed that the Iranian Government was trying to smother all groups that protested against the regime, suppressing demonstrations by Kurds, Arabs, and Turkoman. He complained that Iranian authorities were responding brutally to Kurdish demonstrations with arrests and killings. Kurds recently held separate demonstrations in Simr and Mako, and the Government stifled them. He lamented that Kurdish political parties remained outlawed. Ahmadi said the Iranian Government had organized a committee to understand and mitigate minority demonstrations, but it was ineffective.

¶5. (C) Ahmadi characterized the Kurds in Sinna and Mahabad as highly educated and outspoken about political, social, and human

rights abuses. He claimed Iranian Kurds were organizing to remove Ahmadinejad.

Iranian Kurds Covertly Organize Political Parties

¶6. (C) When asked how Iranian Kurds organized themselves politically, Ahmadi said they were active in secret organizations and parties. He said the KDP-I (Kurdistan Democratic Party - Iran) was the oldest and largest Iranian-Kurd political party inside and outside of Iran.

¶7. (C) As for the ties between the KDP-I and the Iraqi KDP, Ahmadi said the two parties shared good but "complicated" relations. The parties reportedly coordinated on the secret level and transferred academics and other professionals back and forth to educate and support one another. Ahmadi claimed that KDP leader Masud Barzani was a more popular leader among the Kurds in Iran than PUK head Jalal Talabani because of Barzani's positions on Kurdish nationalism. Ahmadi asserted that the PUK, however, is more popular among the educated and younger Iranian Kurds. The PUK supported several Kurdish cultural groups and newspapers in Iran.

¶8. (C) Ahmadi told us that several Iraqi Kurd political party representatives had approached him to join their parties since he arrived in Iraq in January, but he declined. As a journalist, he preferred to avoid political party affiliation because he refused to be bound by political party lines or agendas. Ahmadi boasted that he had become a respected journalist because he resisted the Iranian regime in jail and was politically independent.

Mostly Young Activists Communicating Via Internet

¶9. (C) Ahmadi said the bulk of the Iranian Kurd population is young and politically active. The youth are angry and prone to revolt, while the older generation is more religious. When

KIRKUK 00000101 002.2 OF 002

asked about future Iranian Kurdish leaders, he said there were many Kurds becoming leaders of student unions, NGO's, and civil society in Iran. Ahmadi noted, however, that the most popular Kurd leaders lived outside Iran.

¶10. (C) Ahmadi said most Iranian Kurds relied on the internet for communication and information about what is going on in the world. He said that the Iranian Government prohibits Kurds from owning satellite dishes, but those in the mountains had dishes anyway and mostly watched "Rosh TV," which focused on Iranian Kurdish issues. Ahmadi said Rosh TV and "Voice of America" radio were effective outlets to circulate information.

Comment

¶11. (C) Ahmadi appeared familiar with U.S. positions on Iran and on human rights and may have reported this information to influence, as well as inform us of events on the ground. He certainly spoke from a Kurdish minority, secular optic. He has expressed a desire to obtain political asylum in the United States, and may be slanting his story in hopes of maximizing his chances. Ahmadi's view that Iranian Kurds revere Masud Barzani as the top Kurdish leader, while preferring the PUK's political philosophy is noteworthy. Although we have no strong reason to doubt Ahmadi's reporting, our lack of regular dialogue with Iranian Kurds limits our ability to verify his views.
BIGUS